



The Caribbean Get Together

Trainers from across the Caribbean take part in regional training



After much anticipation, 18 St John trainers from across the Caribbean recently came together to update their First Aid skills, gain new training techniques and to share ideas with other trainers from the region. It was the first time the Order of St John has organised a regional event for trainers and it was a huge success.

Two trainers from the St John Associations of Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Bermuda, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad, as well as four trainers from St John St Lucia came together for the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) event in Rodney Bay, St Lucia from May 30th to 1st June 2008.

Gemma Mullick from the Order Secretariat said. *"The aim of the event was to provide St John trainers with new skills and ideas for delivering First Aid courses in their countries, as well as to build a network of trainers within the Caribbean, who can share ideas and support each other in the future."*

The CPD workshop was facilitated by three trainers, Dawn Upton from the Priory of England & the Islands and Josephine Hall and

Mia Nagasaki-Kelly from the Priory of Canada. During the three days, Dawn, Josephine and Mia got the participants to 'think outside of the box' which involved brainstorming, practical First Aid demonstrations, presentations as well as some creative time to develop some homemade training aids!

"The group were incredibly committed to each task they were given. We wanted the training to be practical as well as relevant to each trainer's needs - so they could return to their St John Associations being able to put their new skills into practice and share what they have learnt with others." Josephine Hall, Priory of Canada.

By the end of the weekend, the strong bond which had developed between the group was clear. Danolar McSween from St John in Grenada said, *"The training was excellent. I now have a better understanding of the different areas and procedures involved in First Aid training."*

I am now more confident and motivated to provide my services to the public through St John Ambulance."



The Order Secretariat would like to thank both the Priory of England & the Islands and the Priory of Canada, who co-facilitated the event and provided a huge amount of resources and support throughout. Congratulations to all involved for making it such a successful event.

Africa Regional Meeting - Mauritius, 26th- 28th February 2008

Tahnee Wade

I had only been at the Order Secretariat for one week, when I found myself on the plane to Mauritius to attend the Africa Regional Meeting. The welcome we received was wonderful and set the tone to a fantastic meeting. Representatives came from every St John Association from the African region.

The President of Mauritius formally opened the meeting, followed by dances by St John Mauritius cadets. The meeting included sessions on STAPLE, the Capacity Building Programme, LIFAC and communications. The Johanniter were also present and ran a workshop on Disaster Response and Preparedness to increase the knowledge of this area.

We were honoured to be part of the opening ceremony of St John Mauritius' new Training Centre, where the Sub Prior, Professor Willis Marshall, planted a tree to inaugurate the event. There was a very auspicious moment when the heavens opened just as the Rt Rev Bishop Wilson Mutebi had finished the prayer.

As someone coming to a regional meeting for the first time, it was heartening to see the high level of interaction and support between the delegates from different Associations. When I spoke to Patrick Orumbie from St John Nigeria he said, *"the interaction between the staff of the Secretariat and Associations shows the unity within the St John family. It is indeed a worthy activity to be encouraged."* We all look forward to the next one in Uganda!



News in brief

New Clinic for Papua New Guinea

The Gordon's Clinic was officially opened by St John Papua New Guinea on 23rd May 2008, after 10 years of being closed. The clinic will provide clinical services for minor conditions, immunisations for children, treatment for pregnant women and provide outreach services to its catchment areas.



Farewell to St John in Monsterratt

Following the volcanic activity on the Caribbean Island of Montserrat in 1995 and 1997, large numbers of the population fled the island to seek safety and many have not returned.

As a result of these changes, it has been very difficult for St John Montserrat to continue its activities and attract new volunteers. The Grand Council therefore felt that it would be best to recommend to the Grand Prior to dissolve the Association, which has been agreed. The Order of St John would like to thank all of those involved in St John Montserrat over the years, for their dedication to the mission of the Order.

Colombo bombing

William Alexander, Priory of Canada - Friday 16th May 2008

A suicide bomber hit the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, this morning - the intended target was a bus full of police officers on their way to a political function. The detonation occurred directly outside the Hilton Hotel. I was nearby at the St John Headquarters, and upon hearing the explosion SJA staff responded to the scene with three ambulances and did a fantastic job in horrific circumstances. The death toll is 15 with another 85-100 injured being taken to the National Hospital.

In focus: Supporting child-headed households

Sister Dominica, St John Zimbabwe

There has been a huge increase in the number of households that are headed by children, particularly due to the devastating impact of AIDS in our communities. Many of these children are just teenagers who are now responsible for looking after their siblings because their parents have either died or are too sick to care for them. In 2007, donations to St John Zimbabwe enabled us to work with such children and train them in courses of Home Based Care (HBC), which had been developed by the Priory of South Africa



Practical learning for the students during a HBC training session

We worked closely with the well known AIDS Centre in Harare called "Mashambanzou". Due to their outreach programme in highly populated suburbs, they were able to give us plenty of names of children in townships that were keen to take part in our training.

By the end of 2007, a total of 160 youngsters had taken part in the course. Everyone received the book, *Caring for Africa*, which they took away and wanted to share with friends who couldn't attend the training.

High on the agenda for the course was "improvisation". For example, how do you make a bed for a sick person on a mat? Bamboo was used to make a bed cradle. Lots of other ideas were shared: paper mache was used to make plates and trays; old bits of plastic for nursing aprons; milk bottles for urinaries; cardboard boxes for back backrests. We were surprised how much ingenuity they developed in making their own equipment once given the general idea.

Our two trainers found the youngsters to be very responsive participants and being trained counsellors as well, the children soon confided in them about their lives. It sadly revealed that there is so much unknown suffering in our communities.

They were all very excited when it came to the day of the examination, a written and a practical test. Much to everyone's delight, they all passed and received their St John certificates. For many of the children it was the first time they have received a certificate - as most of them had left school prematurely in order to care for their siblings. We organised a ceremony, with the certificates being presented by the German Ambassador. It was a wonderful and moving family celebration.

"If I had had the course earlier I could have helped my parents so much better when they were dying."

"HBC prepares me to be a caregiver and it makes me someone who is beneficial to the community."

All of us went home with plenty to think about and the youngsters were so proud and delighted with their achievements. Yet, I find it is us who have been greatly enriched by working with them. Now we don't want to lose each other anymore. The children are so keen



to join St John Ambulance and to remain part of the St. John family. We shall be happy to continue this work in 2008 and as long as it is needed.

Training news from across the Order

Transaid in Uganda

The UK based NGO, Transaid is providing vital training to St John Association's in Africa, to help them manage their ambulance fleets with the ultimate aim of improving the levels of service they can offer to their local communities. Following successful training in St John Zambia, Transaid went to St John Uganda in May 2008.

Transaid conducted a training session for 6 staff which covered the need for a comprehensive transport policy; the financial cost of running ambulances; and key performance indicators of efficient transport.



St John Uganda's National Executive, Christine Nandyose Kasiryeye said *"We are looking forward to using our new knowledge to improve the level of service we can provide. Our vehicles will be more cost effective and as such more accessible to the urban poor who require our assistance."*

Transaid is a charity that seeks to reduce poverty and improve quality of life by providing better access to basic services in Africa and the developing world. They do this by building local skills and knowledge to make transport safer, cheaper and more effective. For more information on Transaid, visit their website www.transaid.org

Resource Mobilisation

St John Sri Lanka's Training Manager, Akalanka, attended the 8th International Workshop on Resource Mobilisation (IWRM) which took place on the 22nd - 25th May 2008 at the Eastin Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia along with 350 other participants from organisations from 53 countries.

The IWRM is a 4 day international workshop focused on providing comprehensive training in all aspects of resource mobilisation and sustainable fundraising techniques.

Akalanka has been putting his new skills into practice in Sri Lanka. His training was funded by the Secretariat's Capacity Building Programme.



Don't forget!

The Order's new and improved website has now gone live. Visit www.orderofstjohn.org to get the latest news from across the Order, to find out more about St John across the globe as well as to download a range of documents from our resource area.

If you would like any information added to the website, please contact Gemma Mullick at gemma@orderofstjohn.org



Dates for diary

- ✓ **Steering Committee: 29th & 30th July, London**
- ✓ **Meeting of the Alliance of the Orders of St John: 9th-12th October, Helsinki**
- ✓ **Caribbean Regional Meeting: 14th & 15th November, Bermuda**
- ✓ **Steering Committee: 18th & 19th November, London**
- ✓ **Installation of the new Lord Prior, Professor Mellows: 20th November, London**

If you have any stories you would like to be covered in The Link or you would like any information on any of the news featured in this edition, please contact Gemma Mullick at the Order Secretariat at gemma@orderofstjohn.org or 0044 (0)207 251 3292.